

SENATE RESOLUTION 40
By Ford J

A RESOLUTION to express our deepest admiration and appreciation to Tori Marcelula Noel, former University of Tennessee great, for starting the Opportunity Foundation.

WHEREAS, those fine citizens of our state who work with extraordinary diligence and dedication to improve the lives of our youth are deserving of special recognition and commendation; and

WHEREAS, Tori Marcelula Noel, a former defensive back for the Tennessee Volunteers, and who is also the founder of the Opportunity Foundation, a new program for at-risk youth, is clearly one such exemplary individual; and

WHEREAS, using a strong foundation in Jesus Christ, this already well-received and highly regarded program is working to provide positive influences for Shelby County's youth; and

WHEREAS, a native of Memphis, Tori played a key role in leading Memphis Melrose High School to a sparkling 9-2 record during his senior year and an overall 21-9 record in three

years as a starter. As a senior defensive back, he was credited with 85 tackles, eight interceptions and he broke up seven passes; and

WHEREAS, his high school career earned him rare national recognition and won him numerous honors, including being named to the *SuperPrep* All-American and the First-Team Sunkist All-American teams, his being rated the 6th best defensive back prospect in the nation, being ranked by the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* as Tennessee's tenth best prospect, and his selection to *The Commercial Appeal's* Tennessee Super Team, and First Team All-State squads; and

WHEREAS, the University of Tennessee was very fortunate when he decided to sign a letter of intent to play for the Volunteers; in his first year at U.T., he made 11 tackles while playing primarily on special teams; and

WHEREAS, after being redshirted in 1994, Tori started 9 of 11 games as a sophomore during the 1995 campaign; he finished the season with 36 tackles, caused three fumbles and broke up four passes; while playing in the Citrus Bowl, he added four more tackles; and

WHEREAS, in his junior season, Tori started all 12 games, made 64 tackles, had 12 big plays and recorded five tackles against Northwestern in the Citrus Bowl; and

WHEREAS, as a senior in 1997, he started all 13 games, was the second-leading tackler on the team with 85 total hits and 54 unassisted tackles, broke up six passes, had three sacks, and made three tackles for losses. He was the Vols leading tackler in the Orange Bowl against Nebraska with 12 and played in the Senior Bowl; and

WHEREAS, following his stellar senior season, Tori was signed a free agent by the then-Super Bowl champion Denver Broncos. He quickly gained the admiration and respect of his teammates for his aggressive play; and

WHEREAS, sadly, Tori's promising career in the NFL was cut short by a serious neck injury; but from a positive standpoint, he is now able to channel his remarkable talents in other directions; and

WHEREAS, despite the numerous honors he has received, Tori is most proud of fulfilling his mother's dream to become the first member of his family to graduate from college; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that we join the citizens of Tennessee in praising this skillful athlete and distinguished person; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we commend Tori Noel for his work with Shelby County youth, expressing to him our deepest appreciation for his excellent leadership in starting the Opportunity Foundation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.

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